

NPL Site Narrative for Comet Oil Co.

COMET OIL CO. Billings, Montana

Federal Register Notice: [June 24, 1988](#)

Conditions at proposal (June 24, 1988): The Comet Oil Co. Site covers approximately 10 acres on Frontage Road in a residential/industrial part of Billings, Yellowstone County, Montana. The facility opened approximately 25 years ago and functioned as a one-person waste oil re-refinery operation until Bair's, Inc. (also known as Mountain States Petroleum Corp.) purchased it in 1974. In 1979, Bair's ceased operation for economic reasons.

A large number of storage tanks and empty 55-gallon drums are on-site, as well as several waste oil lagoons and a large sludge pile. In 1985, 100,000 gallons of contaminated waste oil spilled when vandals opened valves on one tank. Under the supervision of the Montana Department of Health and Environmental Sciences, Comet collected 75,000 gallons of waste oil from the site and a neighboring property; the other 25,000 gallons were lost to the environment. Comet also covered parts of the site with 3-5 feet of soil.

Organic compounds, including benzene, phenol, 2,4-dimethylphenol, naphthalene, and trans-1,2-dichloroethylene, are present in an off-site downgradient monitoring well, according to EPA tests conducted in 1985. Petroleum products and solvents are in soils throughout the site, to a depth of 34 feet in

some parts, according to EPA. Within 3 miles of the site are four municipal wells and one private well that supply drinking water to at least 5,500 people.

Contaminants at the site threaten the Yellowstone River, which is used for recreational activities. The river is 0.6 mile downstream from the site.

Status (February 11, 1991): In response to public comments, EPA re-evaluated the site documentation and the site's score on the Hazard Ranking System used to assess sites for the NPL. Because the score is now below the cutoff point EPA has established to include a site on the NPL, this site is being dropped from consideration for the NPL at this time.

[The description of the site (release) is based on information available at the time the site was evaluated with the HRS. The description may change as additional information is gathered on the sources and extent of contamination. See [56 FR 5600](#), February 11, 1991, or subsequent FR notices.]